

How Behaviour Supports Zero Harm Safety Performance

Zero Harm safety performance means to “cause no harm to anyone whilst at work.”

It is recognised that it is a journey and the measurement of harm often evolves from definition of lost time injuries, to any injury to no harm at all.

What is it?

Over the past 20 years various types of safety management initiatives have been applied to the industry. In the UK from 2000 to 2010, the initiatives of Hard Targets and Target Zero have managed to achieve a 76% reduction in injuries, but has since plateaued. The explanation for this is that the industry has moved through various stages of safety learning to improve site safety and that to achieve further improvements, we need to address the behaviours of people on site.

Sites that have achieved exceptional periods with a “Zero Harm” performance have the defining factor of a strong visible safety leadership within all levels of management and supervision. This leadership drives the mindset and behaviour change to achieve a “Zero Harm” performance.

To explain this, it is necessary to understand the psychology of employees/contractors’ behaviours, mindsets and the beliefs that craft and evolve them. Every individual has their own beliefs which are a combination of their experiences, learning and personal interpretation of events. This can be shown diagrammatically as an Iceberg (Figure 1) with the visible mindsets and behaviours being supported by the individual’s beliefs in the body of the Iceberg (right).

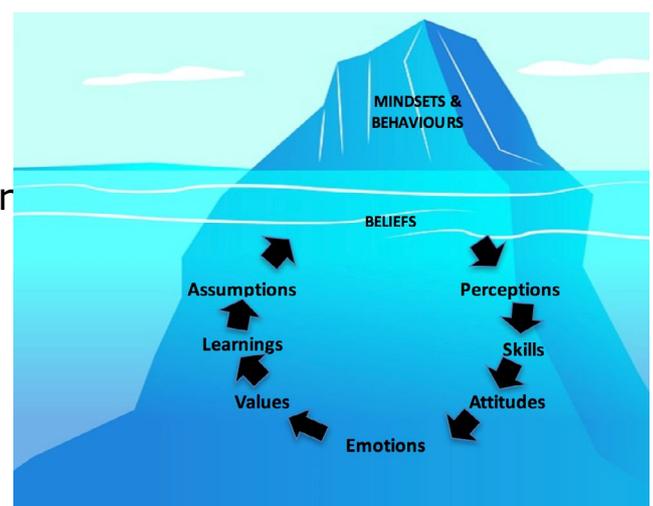


Figure 1 – Belief Model

An individual’s beliefs are continuously being questioned and reinforced.

The way a leader, manager or supervisor interacts with the individual will influence this evidence gathering and thus the individual's beliefs. This is why all levels of leadership must demonstrate and interact with critical behaviours to reinforce positive safety beliefs and question negative belief, thus creating good unconscious safety habits by driving correct behaviour and mindsets.

So what are the good leadership behaviours that can help drive positive reinforcement of desired behaviours?

Create a culture of learning: This sees every incident, near hit/miss or unsafe condition/behaviour as an opportunity to learn and improve a site/organisation's performance. It is better to learn from a high potential incident/near miss and prevent a possibly more serious incident rather than see the original incident as a failure.

Use your physiological strengths: Your energy and body language when communicating safety messages gives powerful reinforcement to your team, employees and contractors. Be aware that how you say something is just as important as what you say when looking to change the behaviour and mindsets of others.

Adapt to your environment: Just as your energy and body language is important in communicating with others, so does matching your behaviour to best suit the situation you are in. You are then more likely to perform at your best and convince others of your message.

Visualise success: If you can imagine what success looks like, it's easier to articulate it and explain it to others as well as being able to celebrate the successes along the journey.

Believe in yourself: Make sure that you build on your own personal set of beliefs that will allow you to reach more of your potential at work. It can be very important when reviewing safety indicators to focus your teams on the positive aspects of safety whilst working on the potential learnings from various incidents, audits and reviews.

Be positive: Look at perceived difficulties, setbacks and problems and see them in a more constructive light. It is so important that leaders, managers or anybody with safety responsibilities to not see incidents as totally negative. If your employees/contractors believe you are not serious about safety or Zero Harm, they will be watching your every move and listening for every word to reinforce their belief. If you are going to change their beliefs you must look for every positive from a situation.

Be challenging: Break out of your comfort zone and overcome any fears that may be holding you back. This could be challenging a colleague's unsafe behaviour or reporting an unsafe condition. Being challenged by a colleague can be a very powerful method of changing that colleague's beliefs. The action will reset the standard of safe behaviour and reinforce other employees' beliefs that the standard is important.

Focus on solutions: This is critical in changing the mindset and behaviours at all levels of an organisation in order to achieve Zero Harm performance. It is a move away from 'blame' to look for solutions. This behaviour is a core foundation to creating a culture that reinforces people to challenge unsafe behaviours and conditions. It also promotes accountability.

Excellence is normal: Key blockers to change are the beliefs that 'if it wasn't invented here, it won't work here' or 'we are all right as we are'. Modelling what excellent good safety practice is can be very powerful to break down people's beliefs. If this behaviour is combined with a lot of employee involvement, it can promote Zero Harm as a realistic goal.

Set inspiring goals: Setting inspiring goals helps to clarify what you want and greatly increases the chance of succeeding. It is a behaviour that is reinforced by virtually all the other listed behaviours and why for safety the only goal you can have is ZERO HARM PERFORMANCE.

Why is it important to me?

These critical leadership behaviours have been identified and often described as "Winning Behaviours". Some managers/supervisors demonstrate them naturally and are well developed, but they can be taught and adopted throughout an organisation/site. Where successful, it has been seen that leadership with "Winning Behaviours" can be a foundation that not only delivers outstanding safety performance, but also customer satisfaction and strong financial growth through good change management.

It is important to remember and understand that the psychology of people's behaviour, mindset and beliefs can be influenced by leadership behaviours. How they can reinforce positive beliefs and question negative beliefs and thus the foundation to achieve a sustained Zero Harm safety performance.

Where Next?

Institute of Quarrying

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Further information can be found via the careers section on the IQ website <https://www.quarrying.org/careers>

Resources, ideas and best practice are shared through the skills wheel <https://www.quarrying.org/members/iq-skills-wheel>

The IQ offers various training courses aimed toward specific management skills

<https://www.quarrying.org/careers/iq-academy-training>